

## An Account of the Functionalist Approach of Translation Applied to Online Journalism

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**Resumo** Este artigo visa apresentar a combinação de três teorias aplicadas à investigação de especificidades linguísticas de traduções de textos jornalísticos *online*. Em primeiro lugar, apresenta-se a Abordagem Funcionalista da Tradução (NORD, 1997) e descreve-se a sua aplicação no contexto em estudo. Em seguida, são descritos os *Memes* e as Estratégias de Tradução de Chesterman (1997). Finalmente, argumenta-se sobre o que é escolhido como Unidade de Tradução no contexto deste artigo. O Corpus utilizado como exemplificação do uso de estratégias de tradução é composto por uma seleção de textos jornalísticos *online* dos sites *The New York Times on the Web* e *BBC News*. Conclui-se o artigo reforçando a eficácia do uso da Abordagem Funcionalista da Tradução no contexto do jornalismo *online* e a necessidade de combinações dessa teoria com outras que melhor se adequem a contextos tradutórios específicos.

**Palavras chave** Abordagem Funcionalista da Tradução, Estratégias de Tradução, Textos Jornalísticos *Online*, Corpus.

**Abstract** This work seeks to show the combination of three theories applied to the investigation of linguistic specificities of translations of online journalistic texts. Firstly, the Functionalist Approach of Translation (NORD, 1997) is presented and its application is described in this context of study. Secondly, Chesterman's (1997) Memes and Translation Strategies are described. Finally, the Unit of Translation chosen for the context of this work is discussed. The Corpus selected to exemplify the use of translation strategies is formed by a compilation of online journalistic texts from the sites *The New York Times on the Web* and *BBC News*. The work is concluded reinforcing the effectiveness of the use of the Functionalist Approach of Translation in the online journalistic context and the need for combinations of the theory just mentioned with others that best fit in specific translation contexts.

**Keywords** Functionalist Approach of Translation, Translation Strategies, Online Journalistic Texts, Parallel Corpus.

### 1 Initial Remarks

The multidisciplinary character of Translation Studies makes it necessary to draw on the adequacies translators have to ponder over when translating online journalistic texts in order to produce translations that achieve the readers' or editors' expectations. To elaborate on the relationship between translation and the area of online journalism it is paramount to define the term Translation in this specific context and to present an ascending interdisciplinary theoretical compilation, starting with Nord's (1991/1997) Functionalist Approach, moving to Chesterman's (1997/2001) Memes and Translation-Strategy Framework, besides the choice of a Unit of Translation that fits both translation and online journalism. It is expected that these core theoretical lines in combination help to clarify how the translation of online journalistic texts is developed.

### 2 Defining Translation in the Online Journalistic Context

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Baker (1998, p. 273) presents a definition for the term Translatability in the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, saying that “[t]ranslatability is mostly understood as the capacity for some kind of meaning to be transferred from one language to another without radical changes.” This seems to be a more ‘traditional’, linguistic definition, based on the transfer of meaning and structure from one language into another.

However, Hewson & Martin (1991) present their definition highlighting cultural aspects:

Translation is the exploration of an unbridgeable gap and of a tension between cultures, variable according to the historical time and the socio-economic motivations of the assessment. Its function is to develop cross-cultural constructions while at the same time bridging and underlining the differences. (...) intercultural translation is the indispensable operator of differentiation.

Translation can be neither an automatised process nor a complete creation. Though often unevenly balanced, the combination of functional and innovative aspects should always be considered as a choice characteristic of the translator’s function. (...) Translation can thus be finally defined as the individually and interculturally motivated choice according to target language socio-cultural norms of a target text by a mediator among sets of homologically related paraphrastic options (HEWSON & MARTIN, 1991, p. 25, 33).

The authors seem to emphasise that, basically because of cultural aspects, it is hard for the translator to produce a target text (TT) that presents the same characteristics and structure of the source text (ST). However, studying the languages involved in the process of translation, as well as the genre involved, it is feasible to produce a TT that, according to its function, keeps meaningful balance between the ST to TT, creating a TT that is target-text oriented.

Bell (1991, p. 13) defines translation as “the expression in another language (or target language) of what has been expressed in another, source, preserving semantic and stylistic equivalences”. This is a more traditional definition, similar to the one previously presented from Baker’s Encyclopaedia. According to the Descriptive Translation Studies Theory, Toury (1995) defines translations as:

...a kind of activity which inevitably involves at least two languages and two cultural traditions, i.e., at least two sets of norm-systems on each level. Thus, the ‘value’ behind it may be described as consisting of two major elements: 1) being a text in a certain language, and hence occupying a position, or filling in a slot, in the appropriate culture, or in a certain section thereof; 2) constituting a representation in that language/culture of another, pre-existing text in some other language, belonging to some other culture and occupying a definite position within it (TOURY 1995, p. 24-25).

The definition above shows that generally there is preference for a translation that is more concerned with the target readership, favouring the TT.

Holz-Mänttari (1984) assumes a functionalist approach to translation and says that she avoids using the term translation because she wants to avoid the traditional concepts and unreflected expectations connected with the word. So, for the author, translation is intercultural cooperation – the process of producing a certain kind of message transmitter, coordinating active and communicative cooperation. Therefore, for

Holz-Mänttari, translation is more than a term to be defined. It is in fact a process used to achieve a certain purpose – her view is therefore more pragmatic.

Before defining the term, Nord (1997) cites Vermeer ([1978] 1983b, 49), who includes interpreting in his definition, and says that translation is a kind of transfer where communicative verbal and non-verbal signs are transferred from one language into another, being also considered as a kind of human action. Finally, Nord (*ibid.*, p. 28) offers her contribution and defines translation as “the production of a functional TT maintaining a relationship with a given ST that is specified according to the intended or demanded function of the TT (translation *skopos*).” The author adds the idea that translation promotes a communicative act which would not be possible to happen because of existing linguistic and cultural barriers. This is precisely the work involving translation – communication not only of words, but mainly of ideas directed to a specific context.

When elaborating on Memes, Chesterman (2000) says that translation can have two functions, depending on the purpose of a translation work: to transfer and to preserve meaning. This idea is in tune with how Nord defines translation above, offering a functionalist look upon translation. The authors cited here present valuable and complementing details for the definition of translation. To my view, it is not possible to select one single definition for the term. So, I will sum up the main points mentioned and formulate the definition that will be used for translation here:

**Translation is the production of a functional text via intercultural cooperation promoting a communicative act that involves progress, interaction and transfer in order to produce a text which maintains a relationship with a given source text.**

### **3 Nord's Functionalist Approach**

This Section provides a broad view of how the Functionalist Approach of Translation operates, specifying the importance and role of the ST in the target-oriented translation process, the languages involved, and some directions to what seems to be more relevant for the production of a target-oriented translation.

#### **3.1 The ST: Its Importance and Language Delimitation**

According to Nord (1991, p. 28), “there can be no process of translation without a source text. (...) ... there has to be a certain relationship between the ST and the TT.” However, “the quality and quantity of this relationship are specified by the translation *skopos*”. The *skopos* will “provide the criteria for the decision as to which elements of the ST-in-situation can be ‘preserved’ and which may, or must, be ‘adapted’ to the target situation.” What Nord seems to be saying is that, although the Functionalist Approach marks the importance of the TT, it does not neglect whatsoever the importance of the ST and highlights its importance for the production of a TT that is highly accepted by the target readership. In this vein, Nord (*ibid.*, p. 72) reinforces that in the Western culture, two points are particularly expected from a TT: “functionality of the TT but also loyalty towards the ST sender and his intention”. The author points out that being ‘loyal’ in Functionalist terms means to be in tune with the ST intention, and not simply with the structure of the ST. Each text must have a different function, but the translator must be loyal to its intention, adapting the structure of the TT to a different

function (*skopos*), if this is the case. In order to have a clear idea of what the ST is about and what its intention is, the translator has to analyse the ST carefully.

The professional translator reads every new ST in the light of his experience as a critical recipient and translator. This experience forms a framework into which he integrates the findings of each new ST reception. (...) His knowledge of the source culture (SC) must enable him to reconstruct the possible reactions of an ST recipient (in case the TT *skopos* requires an “imitation” of the ST functions by the TT), whereas his knowledge of the target culture (TC) allows him to anticipate the possible reactions of a TT recipient and thereby verify the functional adequacy of the translation he produces (NORD, 1991, p. 11).

This position entails that in order for the TT to achieve its specific purposes, it is necessary that the translator fulfil the following requirements: (i) to have sufficient knowledge of both source and target language and culture; and (ii) to know how to deal with both languages in order to analyse the ST, produce a TT and develop research to complete his/her work. The translator has to bear in mind that s/he is “not the sender of the ST message, but a text producer in the target culture” (NORD, *ibid.*, p. 11), using a previous text produced in another context and culture, in order to communicate those ideas for that specific target audience. Thus in the realm of translation competence, such a process is far from being simple and demands a high degree of command of both languages involved besides concentration and attention in order to keep the main idea of the ST present in the TT and also the communication flow ‘well-synchronised’.

Regarding the two languages involved in the translation action discussed here, namely English (both British and American) and Brazilian Portuguese, it seems important to pinpoint that the delimitation of what languages are involved in a translation study is important because, as Nord (*ibid.*, p. 61) says, “languages exist in various geographical varieties”, providing specific signs for language variation in specific contexts, influencing how the translator must analyse the ST. In this respect, some aspects must be highlighted besides linguistic ones: Cultural and political conditions must be identified precisely as well as the process of intercultural communication: (i) who produces the ST; (ii) who orders a translation of the ST; (iii) the ST itself; (iv) who receives the ST and translates it; (v) the TT itself; and (vi) who reads the TT. As can be noticed, the process of producing translations is far from simple and involves different participants, including readership. Such a process cannot be related simply to the purpose of the ST, but mainly to how the TT is going to operate in the target context based on the communicative function of the ST. As Nord (1997, p. 09) mentions, “the function of the TT is not arrived at automatically from an analysis of the ST, but is pragmatically defined by the purpose of the intercultural communication.” In the realm of the Functionalist Approach, the whole process for the production of a target-text oriented translation moves from the analysis of the ST to the recipient of the TT, all the steps being paramount

Moreover, Nord (1991, p. 72) says that a TT can be featured in two different ways: (i) “a document of past communicative action in which an SC sender made an offer of information to an SC recipient by means of the ST,” and (ii) “an instrument in a new TC communicative action, in which a TC recipient receives an offer of information for which the ST served as a kind of model.” The second feature describes a target-oriented ideal TT: There is the presence of the ST marked, but not as the main basis for the TT production. The ST serves as a ‘model’ for the TT production. Another

interesting point in (ii) is the fact that the translation is called an ‘instrument’, marking the pragmatic aspect of target-text oriented translations.

### 3.2 The Model for Source Text Analysis

Nord (1991, p. 01) highlights the importance of having “a model of source [translation-oriented] text analysis which is applicable to all text types and text specimens, and which can be used in any translation task that may arise.” The author claims that such a model can provide the translator with the necessary comprehension of the function and features present in the ST, facilitating the translator’s general analysis of the ST and guiding him/her more precisely throughout the translation work. Such a “model should therefore be (a) general enough to be applicable to any text and (b) specific enough to take account of as many universal translation problems as possible” (p. 02). In general terms, with the application of such a model based on functional criteria, the translator will be able to choose translation strategies that can be more adequate to the purpose of a specific translation. These translation strategies, according to Nord (*ibid.*), are chosen depending on the intended purpose of a particular translation.

It is difficult to delimit what text is functional in a specific context without thinking about the readership, since “a text can have as many functions as it has recipients” (p. 17). In this vein, it is possible to say that a functional text is characterised by “a combination or ‘configuration’ of features”, which can be constituted by both extratextual (pragmatic) and intratextual (semantic, syntactic, and stylistic) elements<sup>1</sup>. Another point mentioned by Nord (*ibid.*, p. 91) matching with Chesterman’s framework is the analysis of linking devices present in a text, such as anaphora (‘thus’, ‘this means’, for example), cataphora (colons, for example), substitutions, recurrence, *i.e.* repetition of elements or patterns, paraphrase, *i.e.* expressing the same content in a different form, pro-forms, all of them being used to analyse the content. These linking devices are present in the translation strategies created by Chesterman and contribute to the analyses of content as well as of particular structures of texts.

Moreover, Nord (1991) says that “it may seem pointless to consider the possibility of matching one translation with one particular ST, or even offering any criteria for an optimum translation” (p. 17). The author mentions such a fact because of the multiplicity of functions and recipients’ expectations. Nord (*ibid.*) goes on to say that “if reception is absolutely dependent on individual conditions [or on the communicative act-in-situation], there will be no chance whatsoever of finding evaluation standards which will take into account every single reception process.” This statement sheds light on the discussion of what is a ‘good’ or a ‘bad’ translation. This is a subjective discussion which generally sounds pointless and impossible to be answered. Nord (*ibid.*) says that in order to overcome this problem, first, it is necessary “to control ST reception by a strict model of analysis which covers all the relevant text features or elements, and, second, to control TT production by stringent ‘translating instructions’ which clearly define the (prospective) function of the TT.” Such a model comprises extratextual (pragmatic) and intratextual (syntactic, semantic, and stylistic) elements, besides considering to what extent a TT seems to represent the recipients’ needs and expectations and when it is necessary to adequate the text to its new audience.

Besides considering the ST analysis and the target readership, it is also important to consider the means in which the TT will be transmitted. According to Nord (*ibid.*), the means of transmission affects both the conditions of reception and those of

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<sup>1</sup> The terms ‘pragmatic’, ‘syntactic’, and ‘semantic’ are also used by Chesterman (1997 & 2000) in his translation-strategy framework to be presented in Section 4 next.

production. The means determines how the information should be presented in respect of: (i) level of explicitness; (ii) arrangement of arguments; (iii) choice of sentence types; (iv) features of cohesion; and (v) use of non-verbal elements such as facial expressions and gestures, etc. By choosing a specific medium it is possible to illustrate the intratextual factors looking at the deictic aspect – situational references –, which do not have to be verbalized explicitly in face-to-face communication, but must be expressed much more clearly in written communication.

In the case of the texts to be investigated here, all the points mentioned previously seem to be relevant, because online news reports apparently make use of deictic aspects frequently. Another relevant point is linked with time, leading to the following comment:

In the case of text types of topical interest, such as news items and news reports, political commentaries, election speeches, weather reports, etc., the dimension of time can be the decisive criterion as to whether there is any point in a text being translated at all, or, if there is, under which circumstances and with which *skopos* it may be worthwhile. (...)

Sometimes it may be wise for the translator to check on the validity of the information given in the source text (if possible) or at least to point out to the initiator that some information in the text may not be up to date.

(...) The dimension of time encompasses not only the time of ST production and reception but also that of TT production (= translation) and reception. The original communicative situation as well as the intercultural communicative situation are determined by their respective temporal “contexts” (NORD, 1991, p. 64-65).

The affirmation above sheds some light on time constraints regarding online news reports, since they are updated and changed much faster than press news, leading to a query Nord (*ibid.*, p. 67) asks: “What fundamental problems arise from a possible time lag between ST and TT situation?” Another comment on the model for ST analysis worth mentioning is:

... a text producer not only selects the particular elements of the code he is going to use in the text but also cuts or omits altogether any detail which he “presupposes” to be known to the recipient, whilst stressing others (or even presenting them with extra information), since the reader should be neither overstretched nor “understretched” (NORD, 1991, p. 53).

This comment describes the production of target-oriented translations common in the area of online journalism.

### 3.3 Translation Purpose

The Functionalist Approach expresses the importance of knowing what the purpose of a translation is, therefore marking that the ST is not the main reference to a translation. Nord (1997, p. 04) cites Reiss & Vermeer (1978/1983) to say that “it must be the intended purpose of the translated text that determines translation methods and strategies, and not the function of the ST.” Nord (1991, p. 16) had already mentioned that “according to the dynamic view of the text adopted, a text does not ‘have’ a

function; a function can only be assigned to the text by the recipient in the act of reception. (...) It is the reception that completes the communicative situation and defines the function of the text: the text as a communicative act is 'completed' by the recipient."

Still referring to the point under discussion, Fawcett (1997, p. 112) seems to share Nord's point of view when he says that "the function of the translation does not have to be the same as that of the original." The quotation above implies that one of the roles of the translator is to consider what is expected from a translation work and the function it will have in the target context. Taking into account what was pinpointed by the scholars above, the core aspects to be investigated when analysing translations of online news reports will be: (i) the orientation of such translations – target-text or source-text oriented; and (ii) what translation strategies seem to fit into each situation and work better in them, according to the purpose (*skopos*) determined.

Vermeer's (2002) article '*Skopos* and Commission in Translation Action' focuses on the idea that any translation is an action with a purpose and presents an explanation for the term *skopos* as "a technical term for the aim or purpose of a translation" (p. 221). The author seems to be emphasizing that the translator needs to have a clear specification of the aim of a determined translation work. After knowing the aim for the translation, the translator can hopefully produce a TT that covers the client's needs as well as the readership's. Following the *Skopos* Theory and the Functionalist Approach, the translator must be aware of his/her actions and decisions.

### 3.4 Translation Orientation

Vermeer (2002) presents the orientation of each text, (*i.e.*, the ST is oriented towards the source culture, and the TT is oriented towards the target culture). Such an orientation defines the role of both ST and TT. The author explains this factor by saying that "source and target texts may diverge from each other quite considerably, not only in the formulation and distribution of the content but also as regards the goals which are set for each, and in terms of which the arrangement of the content is in fact determined" (p. 223). Not only do the formulation, distribution and arrangement of the content in ST and TT have to do with linguistic aspects of both languages, but also with the text type at stake here – online news reports.

Nord (1991, p. 28) seems to be in tune with the points above when she mentions that "translation is the production of a functional TT maintaining a relationship with a given ST that is specified according to the intended or demanded function of the TT (translation *skopos*)."

What the author seems to be saying is that although not following a source-text oriented translation production, it is necessary to keep a relationship between the ST and the TT. However, how far this relationship goes depends on the translation *skopos* and also on the decision of which elements from the ST can be 'preserved', which elements can be 'adapted' or even which elements can be 'left out of' the TT. Nord (*ibid.*) adds the idea that every single TT is addressed to a recipient-in-situation different from the ones to whom the ST is addressed to. Because of this, there must be adaptation of some elements.

One of the main considerations about the translations investigated here is that they are authentic texts, which, in Nord's (*ibid.*, p. 154) view, "are produced for a native speaker recipient who receives the text in a particular situation which will always facilitate comprehension." Such STs are generally not produced in order to be translated and the target context and culture are obviously different from the source context and

culture. Because of this fact, translators must be armed with strategies which might facilitate the translation task.

#### 4. Chesterman's Memes and Translation Strategies

Chesterman (1997) presents the notion of Memes to give support to the translation framework he built and shows the relationship between specific memes of translation strategies to represent tendencies in translation.

##### 4.1 Chesterman's Memes

Chesterman (1997, p. 02, 05) explains that “a meme is simply an idea that spreads”; it is “a unit of cultural transmission, or a unit of imitation.” The author makes an allusion here between memes and genes: “ideas spread, replicate themselves, like genes do” (*ibid.*, p. 02). The main point to be observed here is that there is a kind of subtlety involving the idea of memes. In fact, memes do not happen because one plans to use a certain meme. On the contrary, one has not planned and most of the times s/he does not even know how to explain why a certain meme was used in a determined circumstance. It seems that the use of a specific meme is obvious, or that it is used because ‘everybody else uses it’; although it is not technically possible to say whether it is correct or appropriate for a determined context. It seems that memes come from trial and error tests up to the moment that they are absorbed and accepted as adequate for a context. Moving the idea of memes to translation, it is possible to say that ideas spread and change, from language to language, suffering mutations, like genes. Chesterman considers translations and translators ‘agents of change’ instead of insisting on the myth that a translation must keep the idea of a ST ‘unchanged’:

Like genes, memes are replicators. Examples that Dawkins discusses are the idea-of-God meme and the Darwinian-theory meme. These ideas do not necessarily exist in identical form in different human brains, but there is enough similarity between, say, different people's ideas of Darwin's theory for them to have a common denominator which is the meme. “An ‘idea-meme’,” writes Dawkins ([1976] 1989, p. 196), “might be defined as an entity that is capable of being transmitted from one brain to another.” The fashion for jeans, we might say, has spread like genes (CHESTERMAN 1997, p. 05-06).

The statement above implies that good ideas survive; (*i.e.* those that are conducive to the survival of their carriers: people). By analogy to biology, they are known as mutualist memes, being of mutual benefit to themselves and their carriers. Bad ideas (at least in theory and in the long run) do not last. They are parasitic memes because they eventually kill their host. Of course it may take some considerable time before bad ideas are generally recognised to be potentially threatening in this sense. If a meme is to survive, it must beat its rival memes, (*i.e.* it must win new adherents, gain even wider acceptance).

Chesterman (2000) elaborates on the concept of memes related to translation studies saying that a meme is “an element of a culture that may be considered to be passed on by nongenetic means, especially imitation.” Chesterman was not the first one to introduce the notion of a meme as the cultural equivalent of the gene. It was Richard Dawkins (1976) who first said that:



Just as genes propagate themselves in the gene pool by leaping from body to body via sperm or eggs, so memes propagate themselves in the meme pool by leaping from brain to brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation (DAWKINS, 1976, p. 206; p. 192 in the 1989th edition).

However, it was Chesterman who introduced the idea of memes related to Translation Studies illustrating that “memes spread as people talk to each other, as they read books and listen to music – or as they attend a lecture. Memes also spread via translations” (*ibid.*, 200). The author offers support to this point not with an equative relation concerning translation, but with the idea of replication – an additive relation: “there is dynamic movement over time, but not from a source to a target; one is not carrying something from one place to another, because the ‘something’ still remains at the source text after the translation process is completed” (*ibid.*, 200). The point is that the focus of a translation work is not on the preservation of identity of texts; instead, the focus is on the way texts change as they are translated, and on the examination of the nature and motivation of such changes. This idea seems close to what the Functionalist Approach presents about translation and the focus on the TT presented in 2.3.

Because of the fact that “[s]ome memes encapsulate concepts and ideas about translation itself, and about the theory of translation, let us call them translation memes” (cf. CHESTERMAN 1996a) (*ibid.*, p. 07). In order to bring the allusion of meme/genes – which in fact acts unconsciously and apparently out of people’s control according to the author – to translation, Chesterman (1997) presents memes divided into five translation supermemes<sup>2</sup> – source-target; equivalence; untranslatability; free-vs-literal; and all-writing-is-translating supermemes. In the source-target supermeme, translation is seen as moving from A to B, “carrying across” something from A to B. This is the idea of traditional literal translation, trying to keep the same idea and structure from ST to TT. The equivalence supermeme presents the idea that “a translation is, or must be, equivalent to the source, in some sense at least (*ibid.*, p. 09). In this case, just like in the source-target supermeme, translation has the sense of carrying across, of similarity between source and target text. The untranslatability supermeme is linked to the idea of equivalence; (*i.e.* if there is no possibility of having equivalence between source and target texts, translation is impossible). The free-vs-literal supermeme is linked to the idea of “unit of translation: the smaller the unit, the more literal the result, and the larger the unit, the freer the result” (*ibid.*, p. 12). When opting for a small unit of translation, the TT tends to be produced in a more literal form, and when opting for larger units of translation, the result is a TT that is produced viewing the target audience as well as the function of the TT.

Finally, the all-writing-is-translating supermeme presents the idea that “translating is no more than a form of writing that happens to be rewriting. (...) [T]ranslation is also like the comprehension of everyday speech” (*ibid.*, p. 13). Chesterman (*ibid.*, p. 13) explains this comment citing Schleiermacher ([1813] 1963, p. 38): “we often have to rephrase another person’s words in our own minds, in order to understand”. Chesterman adds that the postmodern view that no texts are original, but they all derivate from other texts, is another support for this supermeme: “writers do not create their own texts but borrow and combine elements from others, linking up in the

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<sup>2</sup> The five supermemes of translation “are ideas of such pervasive influence that they come up again and again in the history of the subject, albeit sometimes in slightly different guises. Some appear to be distinctly more beneficial than others” (CHESTERMAN 1997, p. 07-08).

global textual web. Our words are not ours: they have been used before. (...) There are no ‘originals’; all we can do is translate” (*ibid.*, p. 14).

After introducing the supermemes, Chesterman’s ‘global strategy’ is presented as the general nature of the relation between TT and ST and ‘how freely’ it is possible to translate a text; and ‘local strategy’, as how to translate specific parts of a text, such as a structure, an idea or an item.

## 4.2 Chesterman’s Translation Strategies

Chesterman (1997) classifies what he considers to be the two main communication strategy classes as ‘reduction strategies’, which change or reduce the message in some way and ‘achievement strategies’, which attempt to preserve the message but change the means, such as the use of paraphrase, approximation, restructuring, mime etc. Observing the classification presented so far, it is possible to notice that the author favours a translation type that grants the translator more freedom to develop the translation work either reducing information or using another strategy (paraphrasing, restructuring etc.) in order to achieve a TT that communicates the message successfully. Next, the author defines ‘strategy’ as: “a kind of process, a way of doing something” (p. 88), and goes on saying that “strategies are forms of explicitly *textual* manipulation” and that “a strategy offers a solution to a problem” (p. 89). These are the points that will be considered as definition for ‘translation strategy’ adopted here:

**A strategy is a process which yields a solution to a translation problem by forms of explicitly textual manipulation.**

Chesterman (1997, p. 92) starts to present the classification that translation scholars offer for translation strategies. After such a presentation, Chesterman himself presents a heuristic classification of strategies as well as some aims of a translation, which are: (i) interpretative-communicative (translation of the sense); (ii) literal (linguistic transcodification); (iii) free (modification of semiotic and communicative categories); and (iv) philological (academic or critical translation). Chesterman’s taxonomy of strategies is divided in three subsets and is described as follows:

Syntactic strategies	Semantic Strategies	Pragmatic strategies
G1: Literal Translation	S1: Synonym[y]	Pr1: Cultural Filtering
G2: Loan, Calque	S2: Antonym[y]	Pr2: Explicitness Change
G3: Transposition	S3: Hyponymy	Pr3: Information Change
G4: Unit Shift	S4: Converses	Pr4: Interpersonal Change
G5: Phrase Structure Change	S5: Abstraction Change	Pr5: Illocutionary Change
G6: Clause Structure Change	S6: Distribution Change	Pr6: Coherence Change
G7: Sentence Structure Change	S7: Emphasis Change	Pr7: Partial Translation
G8: Cohesion Change	S8: Paraphrase	Pr8: Visibility Change
G9: Level Shift	S9: Trope Change	Pr9: Transediting
G10: Scheme Change	S10: Other Semantic Changes	Pr10: Other Pragmatic Changes

Table 1. Chesterman’s translation strategies  
‘S’ used in the Semantic Strategies, the ‘G’ in the Syntactic Strategies stands for ‘Grammar’. ‘Pr’ obviously stands for ‘Pragmatic’.

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Next, I present an explanation for each of Chesterman's strategies together with an example taken from a Corpus of online journalistic reports translated.

**Strategy G1 (Literal Translation)** is used to create a TT that is maximally close to the SL in structure.

TT: *[O presidente Bush e o senador John Kerry deram respostas diferentes, mas ambos os candidatos ignoraram o que talvez seja o item mais caro: o impacto da guerra sobre a economia em geral.]*

ST: [President Bush and Senator John Kerry have given different answers, but both candidates have ignored what may be the biggest cost item: the war's impact on the overall economy.] (*The NYT*)

**Strategy G2 (Loan, Calque)** indicates the creation of a word in the target context that was adapted in form and sound from a word from the source context.

TT: *[O chanceler alemão Gerhard Schröder e o presidente francês Jacques Chirac disseram em uma declaração divulgada na segunda-feira que esperam que a Síria retire as suas tropas e **serviços de inteligência** do Líbano "completamente e o mais rapidamente possível"].*

ST: [Chancellor Gerhard Schröder of Germany and President Jacques Chirac of France said in a declaration issued Monday that they expected Syria to withdraw its troops and **intelligence services** from Lebanon "completely and as quickly as possible."]. (*The NYT*)

**Strategy G3 (Transposition)** refers to "any change of word class, from noun to verb, adjective to adverb."

TT: *[Isso ocorre porque os **gastos** em coisas como a ocupação e a manutenção da paz no Iraque nada fazem para melhorar a capacidade produtiva da economia americana.]*

ST: [That is because **spending** on things like the occupation and peacekeeping in Iraq does not do anything to bolster the American economy's productive capacity.] (*The NYT*)

**Strategy G4 (Unit Shift)** stands for a ST unit (morpheme, word, phrase, clause, sentence, paragraph) that is translated as a different unit in the TT.

TT: *[O Pentágono está buscando a ajuda do Departamento de Estado e de outras agências para seu plano de reduzir em mais da metade a população em seu centro de detenção em Guantánamo, Cuba, em parte **com a transferência** de centenas de suspeitos de terrorismo para prisões na Arábia Saudita, Afeganistão e Iêmen, segundo altos funcionários do governo].*

ST: [The Pentagon is seeking to enlist help from the State Department and other agencies in a plan to cut by more than half the population at its detention facility in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, in part **by transferring** hundreds of suspected terrorists to prisons in Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan and Yemen, according to senior administration officials]. (*The NYT*)

**Strategy G5 (Phrase Structure Change)** refers to "a number of changes at the level of the phrase, including number, definiteness and modification in the noun phrase, and person, tense and mood in the verb tense."

TT: *[**"Quanto mais essa guerra demorar, mais fraco será nosso crescimento em longo prazo"**, disse Zandi.]*

ST: ["**The longer this war runs**, the weaker our long-run growth will be," Mr. Zandi said.] (*The NYT*)

**Strategy G6 (Clause Structure Change)** suggests “changes that have to do with the structure of the clause in terms of its constituent phrases.”

TT: [*O que realmente preocupa os economistas, porém, é o **impacto econômico futuro**.*]

ST: [What really worries economists, though, **is the future economic impact**.] (*The NYT*)

**Strategy G7 (Sentence Structure Change)** “affects the structure of the sentence unit.”

TT: [*Com um déficit já em 3,5% do PIB, é realmente uma coisa importante*”, **disse Roach**.]

ST: ["With a budget deficit already at 3.5 percent of G.D.P.," **Mr. Roach said**, "that's a really big deal."] (*The NYT*)

**Strategy G8 (Cohesion Change)** “affects intra-textual reference, ellipsis, substitution, pronominalisation and repetition, or the use of connectors of various kinds.”

TT: [*Em uma fatura típica, escreveu Pete Baldwin, na época o gerente das instalações no Iraque, em um memorando de 2 de fevereiro, a Custer Battles alegava que **uma das** empresas de fachada tinha instalado um heliporto por US\$ 157 mil.*]

ST: [Pete Baldwin, then the Iraq facilities manager, wrote in a Feb. 2 memorandum that in one typical invoice, Custer Battles claimed that **one of its** shell companies had installed a helicopter pad for \$157,000.] (*The NYT*)

**Strategy G9 (Level Shift)** indicates that “the mode of expression of a particular item is shifted from one level (phonology, morphology, syntax and lexis) to another.” This strategy was not present in the texts selected.

**Strategy G10 (Scheme Change)** refers to “kinds of changes that translators incorporate in the translation of rhetorical schemes such as parallelism, repetition, alliteration, metrical rhythm etc.” This strategy seems to be generic in terms of application.

TT: [*Mas a visão de Bush parece **sensibilizar seu público entusiasta**.*]

ST: [Yet Mr. Bush's vision seems **to strike a chord with his crowds**.] (*The NYT*)

**Strategy S1 (Synonymy)** “selects not the obvious equivalent but a synonym or near-synonym for it.”

TT: [*Alguns **juristas** questionaram **tal** argumento.*]

ST: [Some **experts** have questioned **that** reasoning.] (*The NYT*)

**Strategy S2 (Antonymy)** indicates that “the translator selects an antonym and combines this with a negation element.”

TT: [*Mas há pouco **ou nenhum** precedente que sugira como decidirão os tribunais*].

ST: [But there is little **if any** precedent to suggest how the courts would rule]. (*The NYT*)

**Strategy S3 (Hyponymy)** refers to “shifts within the hyponymy relation.” This strategy was not present in the texts selected.

**Strategy S4 (Converses)** stands for the “pair of (usually) verbal structures which express the same state of affairs from opposing viewpoints, such as buy and sell.”

TT: [*Embora este oficial, um tenente-coronel a serviço da Agência de Inteligência do Departamento da Defesa, tivesse sido admoestado pelos seus atos e proibido de participar de qualquer outro envolvimento com os detentos, ele foi **poupado de toda punição adicional, além daquela mera repreensão.***]

ST: [Although the officer, an Army lieutenant colonel attached to the Defense Intelligence Agency, was disciplined and suspended from further involvement with detainees, he **faced no further action beyond a reprimand.**] (*The NYT*)

**Strategy S5 (Abstraction change)** refers to “a different selection of abstraction level”, either moving from abstract to more concrete or from concrete to more abstract. It was not present in the texts selected either.

**Strategy S6 (Distribution change)** indicates the “change in the distribution of the ‘same’ semantic components over more items (expansion) or fewer items (compression).”

TT: [***Muitos soldados** ainda estão estacionados nas montanhas ao redor de Beirute, no norte do país, assim como na região de Bekaa, no leste.*]

ST: [***Many** are still stationed in the mountains around Beirut, in the north of the country, as well as the Bekaa region in the east.*] (*The NYT*)

**Strategy S7 (Emphasis change)** “adds to, reduces or alters the emphasis or thematic focus, for one reason or another.”

TT: [*Dirigindo **caminhões e jipes de fabricação russa** lotados de bens pessoais e utensílios domésticos, soldados sírios seguiram em comboios para Bekaa, (...)*]

ST: [Driving **Russian-made** trucks and jeeps piled with personal belongings and household goods, convoys of Syrian soldiers wound down into the Bekaa, (...)] (*The NYT*)

**Strategy S8 (Paraphrase)** “results in a TT version that can be described as loose, in some contexts even undertranslated. Semantic components at the lexeme level tend to be disregarded, in favour of the pragmatic sense of some higher unit such as a whole clause.”

TT: [*O diretor da CIA, Porter J. Goss, disse ao Congresso nesta quinta-feira (17/3) que as técnicas usadas pela Agência Central de Inteligência "neste momento" para o interrogatório de suspeitos de terrorismo são legais e não constituem tortura*].

ST: Porter J. Goss, the director of central intelligence, said Thursday that he could not assure Congress that the Central Intelligence Agency's methods of interrogating terrorism suspects since Sept. 11, 2001, had been permissible under federal laws prohibiting torture]. (*The NYT*)

**Strategy S9 (Trope change)** “applies to the translation of rhetorical tropes (i.e. figurative expressions).” Probably because of the fact that tropes tend to be more used in literary style, this strategy was not present in the texts selected.

**Strategy S10 (Other semantic changes)** “includes other modulations of various kinds, such as change of (physical) sense or of deictic direction.” This seems to be a very general strategic resource.

TT: [*Além dos 24 casos que o exército definiu como "homicídios criminosos" e os 11 classificados como "homicídios justificados", 28 foram considerados mortes resultantes de acidentes ou causas naturais.*]

ST: [In addition to the 24 Army cases listed as criminal homicides and the 11 cases listed as justifiable homicides, 28 cases **are listed as confirmed or suspected** deaths from accidents or natural causes.] (*The NYT*)

**Strategy Pr1 (Cultural filtering)** is “also referred as naturalisation, domestication or adaptation.” This strategy was not present in the texts selected.

**Strategy Pr2 (Explicitness change)** is used to make the TT information either more explicit (explicitation) or more implicit (implication).

TT: [*Até o momento, o governo não declarou publicamente que sua principal meta em relação ao Irã é rever um tratado **que remonta o governo Eisenhower, um inspirado em grande parte pelos Estados Unidos sob a bandeira da Guerra Fria de "Átomos para a Paz"***]

ST: [So far the administration has not declared publicly that its larger goal beyond Iran is to remake a treaty **whose intellectual roots date back to the Eisenhower administration, under the cold war banner of "Atoms for Peace."**] (*The NYT*)

**Strategy Pr3 (Information change)** makes use of “either the addition of new (non-inferable) information which is deemed to be relevant to the TT but not present in the ST, or the omission of ST information deemed to be irrelevant.”

TT: [*Testemunhas disseram **ter ouvido um forte estrondo** dentro do pátio da mesquita, que ainda está em construção.*]

ST: [Witnesses described **seeing a ball of fire and hearing a huge explosion** inside the courtyard of the mosque, which is still under construction.] (*BBC*)

**Strategy Pr4 (Interpersonal change)** “alters the formality level, the degree of emotiveness and involvement, the level of technical lexis and the like: anything that involves a change in the relationship between text/author and reader.”

TT: [*"Queremos a retirada das tropas sírias, queremos a verdade sobre quem ordenou o assassinato de **Rafik Hariri**, e queremos a renúncia daqueles responsáveis pela segurança no país".*]

ST: ["We want the withdrawal of the Syrian troops, we want the truth about who ordered the killing of **Mr. Rafik Hariri**, and we want the resignation of those who are responsible for security in the country."] (*The NYT*)

**Strategy Pr5 (Illocutionary change)** is “linked with other strategies: changing the mood of the verb from indicative to imperative, a change from statement to request.”

TT: [*"**Vamos retirar nossas objeções ao pedido do Irã para entrar na OMC**", afirmou a secretária de Estado, Condoleezza Rice.*]

ST: [US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said **it would no longer object to Iran joining the World Trade Organization.**] (*BBC*)

**Strategy Pr6 (Coherence change)** indicates “the logical arrangement of information in the text, at the ideational level.”

TT: [O relatório constata que os primeiros sinais de alerta de que estavam ocorrendo **sérios abusos nos tratamentos dispensados a detentos, não foram objeto da atenção** devida por parte do alto-escalão, enquanto as práticas de maus-tratos continuaram a se alastrar.]

ST: [The report finds that early warning signs of **serious abuses did not receive enough high-level attention** as the abuses unfolded, and that unit commanders did not get clear instructions that might have halted the abuses.] (*The NYT*)

**Strategy Pr7 (Partial translation)** refers to “any kind of partial translation, such as summary translation, transcription, translation of the sounds only, and the like.”

TT: [Os insurgentes atacaram no norte e no centro do Iraque, nesta quarta-feira (11/05), numa série atentados com bombas que mataram pelo menos 79 pessoas em três cidades diferentes, e feriram pelo menos 120 outras pessoas.]

ST: [Insurgents strike in northern and central Iraq, killing at least 79 people and wounding 120 others in series of suicide bombings and bloody attacks in Tikrit, Hawija and Baghdad; two-week onslaught by Sunni Arab insurgents is aimed at destabilizing Iraq's newly formed Shiite-majority government; eruptions of violence leave new government of Prime Min Ibrahim al-Jaafari looking vulnerable only nine days after it was sworn into office; Jaafari has been less assertive than his predecessor as prime minister Ayad Allawi, who won reputation for aggressive pursuit of war; American officials hoped he would find prominent place in new government, but he has chosen to stay on sidelines after Shiite leaders rejected what they saw as push by him for disproportionate power in new administration; Shiite leaders led by Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani have urged restraint, arguing that Shiite interests are best served by gaining power through elections, not by being drawn into civil war; photo; map (M)] (*The NYT*)

**Strategy Pr8 (Visibility change)** shows “a change in the status of the authorial presence, or to the overt intrusion or foregrounding of the translatorial presence. For instance, translator’s footnotes, bracketed comments or added glosses explicitly.”

TT: Três funcionários do alto-escalão do Departamento da Defesa explicaram nesta **quarta-feira (9)** que as novas instruções evidenciam a proibição da utilização de cães com focinheiras durante os interrogatórios.

ST: Three senior defense officials said **Wednesday** that the new procedures clarified the prohibition against the use of muzzled dogs in interrogations, gave specific guidance to field units as to how long they could hold prisoners before releasing them or sending them to higher headquarters for detention, and made clear command responsibilities for detainee operations. (*The NYT*)

**Strategy Pr9 (Transediting)** stands for “the sometimes radical re-editing that translators have to do on badly written original texts.” This case was not present in the texts selected.

**Strategy Pr10 (Other pragmatic changes)** involves changes in the layout, for example, of the TT and the ST, as well as dialect change. In the case of the texts selected, the layout as a whole has to be changed from the STs to the TTs.

It seems important to remind the reader that the texts are analysed in a non-evaluative direction, considering basically the translation strategies used. Chesterman (1997, p. 37) says that “[i]n keeping with its general target-text orientation, the concept of a translation is understood in whatever terms a given target culture happens to understand it at a given time. That is to say, a translation is any text that a given culture accepts as a translation, even a ‘bad’ translation.”

Let me present now two other comments made by Chesterman (*ibid.*, p. 509). The first one is that strategies in general must be evaluated within a context in order to maintain the functional and dynamic nature of translation. This comment corroborates the idea that in order to classify the strategies used in the translated texts, it is necessary to have a clear idea of what unit of translation is going to be adopted, and of the fact that the unit of translation is closely linked to context. The second comment is that “translation [strategies] are not good or bad in themselves, they are used functionally and dynamically in terms of: (i) the genre of the text; (ii) the type of translation; (iii) the mode of translation; (iv) the purpose of translation and the characteristics of the translation audience; and (v) the method chosen.” However, even having the idea that “translation [strategies] are not good or bad in themselves”, when translating an online journalistic text, the three categories Chesterman presents for translation strategies must be verified in terms of adequacy to the situation and to see whether their use seems to contribute to the production of a translation that provides the needs of the target audience. Chesterman (*ibid.*, p. 93) claims that the point “is not to explore particular translations in any detail, but **simply** (highlight mine) to present a set of strategies that professionals tend to use. The level of analysis is fairly superficial.” This comment sounds rather ‘simplistic’ to me and now it seems the moment has come to explore such strategies in more detail with the aim of considering text types in particular, deepening the level of analysis and observing whether professionals “tend to use” the translation framework.

## 5 The Concept of Unit of Translation

In order to observe the texts in the Corpus selected for this work, it is of chief concern to define and choose what is going to be adopted as Unit of Translation (for now on, UT). There is not any consensus for the definition of the term. The clause, word, morpheme etc. – considered as the smallest textual units – are sometimes adopted as UT by literal translators to produce their translations. However, such a use does not help in the production of a functional, target-text oriented translation because the use of small UTs tends to be classified as source-text oriented, differing from the proposal used for translating online journalistic texts.

According to Alves (2000, p. 30), the delimitation of a UT depends on how the translator considers the dichotomy fidelity *versus* freedom. The author exemplifies this idea with definitions used for UT by different scholars, starting with Vinay & Darbelnet (1958), who defined UT as “the smallest segment of a statement whose signs of cohesion cannot be translated separately”. In this respect, Alves (*ibid.*) highlights that “a UT must be as small as possible in order for the text to keep its ‘fidelity’ to the original.” In this case, the translation will be source-text oriented and the result will be the production of a text that favours the source text – whose readers in fact are not the



ones reading the translation produced – overlooking the needs of the target text and readership, who are the ones expected to read the translation. Alves goes on to present a restricting view of the UT as a space as small as possible and as long as necessary. In this case, the idea is that the translator has some freedom to analyse the needs of the target text and so, s/he will choose a UT according to such needs.

Furthermore, Alves (*ibid.*) says that after Discourse Analysis and the need to have a field of research in Translation Studies dealing with functionality, the whole text started to be considered the UT, following the idea that the longer the UT, the more dynamic the translation will be and more directed to the target readership. This idea seems to tie with what Luo (1992) pinpoints about the impossibility to find an ideal UT that works well for both analysis and transfer. The author suggests that two kinds of UT be established – one to be used in transfer (the clause) and another one to be used in analysis (the text). Luo justifies his choice by saying that sentence and text are dynamic while other units, just like the word, phrase, clause, are static. I subscribe to the author's view that the analysis must be contextualized, inside the text. Therefore, in order to apply Chesterman's Translation Strategies to observe the translation of online journalistic texts, which is the Corpus selected here, I need to use a unit smaller than the text – the sentence, in this case.

Alves (2000, p. 31) affirms that none of the positions presented above helps the translator appropriately. The author adds that after Discourse Analysis and Functionalism, free translation has moved from the sentence level to the whole-text level. So, once again we are back to the issue of fidelity *versus* freedom dichotomy. A suggestion presented in order to delimit the size of the UT is that the translator should restrict his analysis first to word level, then to idiomatic expressions, phrases, clauses and sentences. Finally, Alves presents an empirical research carried out in order to delimit UT of a given translation. The empirical data obtained showed the existence of UTs at the level of morpheme, syllable, word, phrase, clause, sentence, and even in the discourse level. The conclusion is that the units of comprehension and production in a translation are similar to the ones identified in the spoken or written discourse. According to the author, empirical data show that most translators prefer to place a UT in the phrase or sentence level. This seems to be the case present in the Corpus under study – authentic – online news reports that will need to be analysed adopting a UT that is longer than a word and shorter than a text – once again, the sentence sounds the best option.

So, for the purposes of this work, what is going to be called UT is the sentence<sup>3</sup> in itself. In order to justify such a choice, I will use Lin Yu-Tang's (1984) elaborations on the matter. Lin (1984, p. 263) claims that "translation should be done on the basis of the sentence [...]. What a translator should be faithful to is not the individual words but the meaning conveyed by them". The author seems to be claiming that words by themselves can sound meaningless, but within a context, their meaning is enriched and can be adapted according to the situation.

Lu Jun (1992) also argues that the sentence should be the UT and he enumerates three reasons for this: (i) semantically speaking, sentences can render word meanings in a less ambiguous way; (ii) morphologically speaking, in group, sentences can create a particular effect on the reader, because grouped sentences are similar in form but different in meaning; and (iii) communicatively speaking, grouped sentences can convey information because each sentence has theme/rheme that reflects the author's thoughts and ideas. This last reason boils down to the point I intend to make here, for

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<sup>3</sup> By 'sentence' I mean a clause complex, a segment set off by full stops.

the fact that it deals with conveyance of information – transference of information from one language into another via online news reports.

## 6 Final Remarks

I have attempted to draw the theoretical limits of this study and to elaborate on how the theoretical points worked on favour to boil down the realm of translation of online journalism, showing the benefits of the Functionalist Approach of Translation combined with other theories, in this case, Memes and Translation Strategies and the Unit of Translation. The objective was to present how both translation scholars, Nord and Chesterman, elaborate on Functionalism and Memes/Translation Strategies respectively, seeming to overlap with each other in terms of how to produce a translation focused on the target-oriented context without neglecting the source (con)text. Taking into account the concept of translation adopted here, the Functionalist Approach and Chesterman's Memes and Translation Strategies, the choice for a Unit of Translation applied to the Corpus selected seem to be an effective combination for the analysis of translated online journalistic texts in linguistic terms.

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